



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Glacier National Park
(A part of Waterton-Glacier
International Peace Park)

P.O. Box 128
West Glacier, MT 59936
www.nps.gov/glac/home.htm

406 888-7800 phone
406 888-7808 fax

Glacier National Park News Release

October 28, 2002

For Immediate Release

Lou Summerfield 406-888-7945

Bill Hayden 406-888-7927

NEWS02-84

Lake McDonald Sewer System to be Upgraded


Vaults to be installed in compliance for 2002 sewage spill

WEST GLACIER, MONT. – Initial work is underway near Lake McDonald Lodge to install eleven 1,000 gallon vaults and new valves, along the existing sewer force main at specific drain points, officials at Glacier National Park announced today. This sewer system upgrade is required compliance as mitigation for a sewage spill that occurred in June 2000, wherein an estimated 180,000 gallons of sewage spilled near Lake McDonald. This project is intended to eliminate a direct conduit between the sewer force main and McDonald Lake.

Contractor, Janetski Construction of Kalispell, will install the concrete vaults along sewer force main that parallels the Going-to-the-Sun Road corridor between Apgar and Lake McDonald Lodge.

Construction is expected to last from three to five weeks. The contractor hopes to be completed by November 15, weather permitting, however, if work cannot be completed before winter weather interferes with the project, if necessary, Janetski Construction is authorized to continue work in spring 2003.

The contractor will be working in one lane of the Going-to-the-Sun however, one lane will remain open at all times. Motorists should exercise caution in the construction zones, and will encounter brief delays. Traffic signals will be used to regulate traffic movement through the area. The contractor will be working daily through November 9.



Manhole covers will be installed in the roadway at the site of the vaults. Once completed, the manhole covers should be the only remaining evidence of the sewer system upgrade.

This mitigation project is the park's response to a sewage spill that was first observed on June 2, 2000. The spill occurred along the western edge of Lake McDonald, two miles east of Apgar, from a sewage line running from Lake McDonald Lodge to the park's treatment plant in West Glacier. U.S. Public Health Services and the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) was immediately notified and the area was temporarily closed to the public until the area was cleaned up. The spill was estimated to be 180,000 gallons, however, an undetermined amount actually entered the lake. The NPS was cited by the Montana Department of Environmental Quality and required to provide direct mitigation to insure that such a spill does not occur in the future.

After the June 2000 incident, investigators conducted a root-cause analysis to determine preventative measures. They found that a drain valve (located approximately 50 feet from Lake McDonald) had been left open along the sewage line running from Lake McDonald Lodge to the waste treatment plant near West Glacier. Prior to this upgrade, there was no intermittent holding capability along the sewer main. In 2000, the sewage had leaked into the ground in the vicinity, with an undetermined amount actually reaching the lake. According to park officials, the installation of vaults along the sewer force main will provide mid-line holding potential not previously in place. This will accommodate the holding of sewage at numerous points along the sewer line as preventative measures.

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